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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0055

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE

RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3233

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1048

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0919

RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1496

RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2098

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC

RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC

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SIPDIS

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: AHAL TEKE TRIBE DOMINATES GOVERNMENT

REF: ASHGABAT 1284

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY: Examination of background information that is available on government leadership reinforces the widely-held notion that President Berdimuhamedov's Ahal Teke tribe dominates the senior levels of government. Members of other tribes also have positions of power, particularly in the oil and gas sector, but this may be a place where job skills trump point of origin. Twenty-six of 31 top Government of Turkmenistan officials are descended from the Ahal Teke tribe, the dominant tribe in Turkmenistan. There are two officials from each of Mary Teke and Balkan Yomut tribes. While Dashoguz Yomut tribe is slightly better represented than the latter two, the Ersari tribe is not represented at all. All Law Enforcement Officials are Ahal Tekes. END SUMMARY.

TOP ECHELON STRONGLY AHAL TEKE

¶3. (SBU) Available information revealed that 26 of 31 senior officials, or roughly 84 percent, including President Berdimuhamedov, come from Ahal Province, suggesting that they are Ahal Teke, the most dominant tribe in Turkmenistan (reftel). The Speaker of Parliament, Akja Nurberdiyeva, is also Ahal Teke, as are four of the seven Deputy Chairmen of the Cabinet of Ministers. They are:

-- Rashid Meredov, the Deputy Chairman for Foreign Relations and Minister of Foreign Affairs. (NOTE: Post has heard that Meredov's mother is an ethnic Azeri and that he speaks Azeri fluently, but nationality and tribe in Turkmenistan are based on the father's lineage. Because Meredov was born in Ashgabat, he is presumably Ahal Teke. END NOTE.);

-- Hojamuhammet Muhammedov, Deputy Chairman for Economy, Finance, Textile, and Agriculture;

-- Nazarguly Shagulihev, Deputy Chairman for Energy, Industry, Construction and Motor Transport;

-- Gurbannazar Ashyrov, Deputy Chairman for Communication and Transportation.

The remaining three Deputy Chairmen representing minority tribes are Tachberdi Tagiyev, responsible for Oil and Gas, who is likely Balkan Yomut; Hydry Saparliyev, who covers Education, Science, and Healthcare; and Maysa Yazmuhammedova, responsible for Culture, TV Broadcasting and Press. The latter two are likely Mary Teke.

AHAL TEKE DOMINATE THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL

¶4. (SBU) Available information also suggests that 14 of 16 key ministers or ministerial-level officials from various sectors are Ahal Teke. They are:

-- Bayrammyrat Muradov, Head of the State Agency for Management and Use of Hydrocarbon Resources;

-- Baymurat Hojamuhammedov, Minister of Oil and Gas Industry and Mineral Resources;

-- Gurbannur Annaveliyev, Minister of Energy and Industry;

-- Hojamyrat Geldimyradov, Minister of Economy and Finance;

-- Geldimyrat Abylov, Chairman of Central Bank;

-- Jemal Goklenova, Minister of Textile Industry;

-- Norekguly Ataguliayev, Minister of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations;

-- Ata Serdarov, Minister of Healthcare and Medical Industry;

-- Muhammetgeldi Annaamanov, Minister of Education;

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-- Esenmyrat Orazgeldiyev, Minister of Agriculture;

-- Resulberdi Hojagurbanov, Minister of Communication;

-- Shamuhammet Durdyliyev, Minister of Construction and Construction Materials Industry;

-- Deryaguly Muhammetgulyev, Minister of Railway Transportation;

-- Gulmyrat Myradov, Minister of Culture and Broadcasting.

The two ministers who represent minority tribes are Yagshygeldi Kakayev, State Minister of Turkmen Gas Concern, who is a Dashoguz Yomut and Garyagdy Tashliyev, State Minister of Turkmen Oil Concern, a Balkan Yomut.

POWER POSITIONS LIKEWISE AHAL TEKE

¶5. (SBU) Not surprisingly, Ahal Teke representatives also completely monopolize law enforcement and power ministries. Defense Minister Agageldi Mammetgeldiyev, Minister of National Security Charymyrat Amanov, Minister of Internal Affairs Orazgeldi Amanmyradov, Minister of Justice Myrat Garryev, Prosecutor General Muhammet Ogshukov, and Chairman of the State Border Service Bayram Alovov all come from Ahal Province, making it likely they are all Ahal Tekes. (NOTE: The former Minister of National Security, Geldimuhammet Ashyrmuhammedov, was from the small minority Nohur tribe. Although he resigned reportedly due to health reasons, Post has heard that Ashyrmuhammedov had to work twice as hard and constantly show his loyalty to the leadership to prevail in his position. END NOTE.)

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: Given the strong predominance of Ahal Tekes in the top echelons of government here, it is safe to say that President Berdimuhamedov wants the tribe to be the most politically influential. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the president has chosen to entrust three major portfolios relating to Turkmenistan's oil and gas wealth to two Balkan Yomuts and a Dashoguz Yomut. The appointment of these three officials may be one sign of Berdimuhamedov's preference, particularly when it comes to certain high-value sectors, for choosing people for their competence,

knowledge, and experience. This strongly contradicts former President Niyazov's practice of appointing young and inexperienced sycophants. END COMMENT.

¶7. (U) BACKGROUND: Historically, the Dashoguz Yomut were associated with the Khanate of Khiva, and the Esarai in the east with the Khanate of Bukhara. The Balkan Yomut in the west were nomadic herders and fishermen. The Ahal Teke for the most part exchanged nomadism for urban and agricultural life long before the 19th-century Imperial Russian invasion and mixed freely with the Persians to the south, developing a relatively cosmopolitan reputation. The first generation of Soviets in the 1920s hoped to introduce liberal European values and blur tribal allegiances, but throughout the Soviet era, the Ahal Teke dominated the senior positions of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan. In the late 1920s, the Soviet authorities published a decree moving the capital from Ashgabat to Charjev (now Turkmenabat) in the east, but the Ahal Teke Soviets dragged their feet until it never happened. There has always seemed to be a consensus among Turkmen, accepted so long as everyone gets a culturally appropriate share, that the Ahal Teke are first among equals.

HOAGLAND